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REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONCLUDING DOCUMENT OF THE TWELFTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Regional confidence-building measures

Report of the Secretary-General

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1 - 3	2
II.	SECOND MEETING OF THE STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SECURITY QUESTIONS IN CENTRAL AFRICA	4 - 20	3
III.	THIRD MEETING OF THE STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SECURITY QUESTIONS IN CENTRAL AFRICA	21 - 43	6
IV.	CONCLUSION	44 - 45	10

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its forty-seventh session, on 15 December 1992, the General Assembly adopted resolution 47/53 F, which contains the following key paragraphs:

> "The General Assembly,
>
> "...
>
> "1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on regional confidence-building measures, 1/ which deals chiefly with the organizational meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, held at Yaoundé from 27 to 31 July 1992 under the auspices of the United Nations;
>
> "2. Supports and encourages efforts aimed at promoting confidence-building measures at regional and subregional levels in order to ease regional tensions and to further disarmament and non-proliferation measures at regional and subregional levels in Central Africa;
>
> "3. Welcomes the programme of work including confidence-building measures adopted by the States members of the Economic Community of Central African States at the organizational meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee;
>
> "4. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide assistance to the Central African States in implementing the programme of work of the Standing Advisory Committee;
>
> "5. Also requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution;
>
> "6. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-eighth session the item entitled 'Regional confidence-building measures'."

"1/ A/47/511."

2. This report is submitted by the Secretary-General in implementation of paragraph 5 of the resolution.

3. The activities of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa since the previous report of the Secretary-General mentioned above have been principally concerned with two important meetings on the implementation of the programme of work of the Committee.

II. SECOND MEETING OF THE STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SECURITY QUESTIONS IN CENTRAL AFRICA

4. In accordance with the procedural decisions adopted at the meeting held at Yaoundé from 27 to 31 July 1992, the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa was held at Bujumbura at the expert level from 8 to 10 March 1993 and at the ministerial level from 11 to 12 March 1993.

5. Delegations from the following countries took part in the meeting: Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda and Sao Tome and Principe. Zaire and Angola were unable to attend the meeting. The secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), which had been invited, was also unable to attend.

6. At the opening ceremony of the ministerial meeting, statements were made by the Acting Director of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, representative of the Director of the Office for Disarmament Affairs; Mr. Martin-Fidèle Magnaga, Minister of Defence, Security and Immigration of Gabon, First Vice-Chairman of the Committee, standing in for the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cameroon, current Chairman of the Committee, unable to attend; and Mr. Libère Bararunyeretse, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Burundi and representative of the host country.

A. Election of officers

7. The officers of the Committee were elected by consensus, as follows: Chairman, Burundi; First Vice-Chairman, Gabon; Second Vice-Chairman, Congo; Rapporteur, Chad.

B. Progress of work

8. The participants in the meeting considered the following items:

1. Review of the status of international legal instruments concerning arms limitation and disarmament as they affect the States members of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)

9. The Committee recommended that the States members of ECCAS should accede to multilateral disarmament agreements, and that the above-mentioned agenda item should be included in the agenda of the next meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee for updating.

2. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in the Central African subregion

10. In their exchange of views, the participants noted that the subregion was still faced with threats and suffered from various weaknesses and internal crises, the causes of which were internal and/or external.

11. After a brief consideration of the geopolitical and security situation in the subregion, the Committee made, inter alia, the following observations:

(a) The accumulation of weapons of mass destruction in the world remains, in global terms, a source of threat to peace and security in the subregion.

(b) The Central African subregion contains a number of specific threats which are liable to compromise peace and security within the region, in particular:

(i) Border problems;

(ii) The aggravation of socio-ethnic and socio-political rivalries;

(iii) The problem of refugees and displaced persons;

(iv) Natural disasters;

(v) Socio-economic problems;

(vi) The interplay of power and conflicts between States;

(vii) Arms transfers;

(viii) The North-South divide;

(ix) Traffic in drugs and narcotics;

(x) International terrorism.

12. Desiring to promote a climate of peace and security in the subregion, the ministerial meeting recommended that the member States of the subregion should implement the measures contained in the programme of work of the Standing Advisory Committee adopted in July 1992 at Yaoundé, and in particular that they should:

(a) Respect the rights of minorities;

(b) Create stable socio-economic and political conditions with a view to settling populations;

(c) Promote internal transparency in the management of democracy;

(d) Respect human rights;

(e) Draw up legal instruments for collective security;

(f) Respect bilateral and multilateral agreements.

13. Furthermore, the Committee recommended that review of the geopolitical and security situation in the subregion should be a permanent item on the agenda of its meetings and should be given priority consideration.

3. Consideration of the draft non-aggression pact between the States members of ECCAS

14. After considering the preliminary draft of the non-aggression pact between the States members of ECCAS, the Committee decided to submit the resulting draft text to the member States for consideration and adoption at the next meeting of the Committee.

4. Elaboration of specific measures for promoting the establishment of a standing inter-State general staff for crisis management with a view to setting up a subregional peace-keeping force

15. After a concerted analysis of this item, measures of a political, legal and structural nature were considered and it was agreed that they should be examined in greater depth at the next meeting of the Committee.

16. In anticipation of the establishment of a subregional collective security management mechanism, the Committee recommended that the functional relations between ECCAS, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the United Nations and any other partner should be taken into account.

17. With that prospect in mind, the Committee proposed that the implementation of those measures should be in keeping with the collective security management mechanisms being prepared by OAU.

5. Elaboration of specific measures for promoting agreement on a balanced and gradual reduction of the military forces, equipment and budgets of member States

18. In view of the complexity of the question, the participants recommended that a study should be undertaken on the restructuring of the armies and reconversion of military personnel, which would serve as a working document for further discussions.

19. The Committee requested the assistance of the United Nations for the undertaking of that study.

6. Other matters

20. Having noted the current financial difficulties facing the ECCAS secretariat, and in view of the necessary involvement of that organization in the process of maintaining peace and security in the subregion, the Committee proposed that the costs incurred by the Secretary-General of ECCAS or his representative when attending meetings of the Committee should be borne by the host country.

III. THIRD MEETING OF THE STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SECURITY QUESTIONS IN CENTRAL AFRICA

21. The third meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa was held at Libreville at the expert level from 30 August to 1 September 1993 and at the ministerial level from 2 to 3 September 1993.

22. Delegations from all countries represented on the Committee took part in the meeting: Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe and Zaire.

23. At the opening ceremony of the ministerial meeting, statements were made by His Excellency Mr. Martin-Fidèle Magnaga, Minister of National Defence, Security and Immigration, representative of the host Government, and Ambassador Hassen Fodha, representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. His Excellency Mr. Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Burundi, current Chairman of the Committee, delivered the opening address.

A. Election of officers

24. The officers of the Committee were elected by consensus, as follows: Chairman: Gabon; First Vice-Chairman: Congo; Second Vice-Chairman: Angola; Rapporteur: Zaire.

B. Progress of work

25. The participants in the meeting considered the following items:

(a) Review of the status of international legal instruments concerning arms limitation and disarmament as they affect the countries of the subregion;

(b) Review of the geopolitical and security situation in the Central African subregion;

(c) Exchange of views on the theme "Democratization, human rights and stability in Central Africa";

(d) Elaboration of specific measures for promoting agreement on a balanced and gradual reduction of the military forces, equipment and budgets of member States;

(e) Elaboration of measures for promoting the establishment of a standing inter-State general staff for crisis management with a view to setting up a subregional peace-keeping force;

(f) Consideration of the draft non-aggression pact between the States members of ECCAS.

1. Review of the status of international legal instruments concerning arms limitation and disarmament as they affect the countries of the subregion

26. Having considered the matter, the Committee emphasized that it was in the interest of all the States of the subregion to accede to international legal instruments concerning arms limitation and disarmament and invited them to sign and/or ratify the instruments within 18 months, with due regard for the constitutional procedures appropriate to each country.

2. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in the Central African subregion

27. Following an exchange of views on this matter and having regard to the crises and armed conflicts noted in certain countries of the subregion, the Committee recommended that its officers should:

(a) Play a more committed political role in the search for solutions to crises and conflicts that potentially threaten the peace, stability and development of a member country of the subregion;

(b) Initiate and join in any action tending to promote a peaceful solution to crises and conflicts in the subregion; and

(c) Undertake solidarity missions to States which request them, in order to express to the peoples of these sister countries the support and active solidarity of member countries.

28. The Committee also urged member countries to participate in observer missions and peace-keeping and humanitarian operations, under the auspices of the United Nations and/or OAU, in subregional conflict areas.

29. With regard to the situation in Rwanda, the Committee welcomed the signature of the Arusha Peace Agreement of 4 August 1993, which opened up the prospect of an era of peace and national reconciliation in that country. It urged the international community to support the effective implementation of the Agreement.

30. The Committee recommended that member States of the subregion should show their active solidarity with the peace process unfolding in that sister country and use their influence at the United Nations to encourage it to proceed as soon as possible to the deployment of the neutral international force provided for in the Peace Agreement.

31. As for the situation in Angola, the Committee expressed its concern with regard to the delay in the peace process in that country. It urged its Angolan brothers to follow the path of negotiation in preference to armed struggle in the interest of their people.

32. The Committee supported and encouraged all the efforts made at both the bilateral and the multilateral level to find a negotiated solution to the Angolan conflict.

33. Stressing the importance of the Declaration of the OAU Heads of State and Government on the situation in Angola (AHG/Decl.2-XXIX), the Committee urgently requested UNITA to comply with Security Council resolution 851 (1993).

34. Lastly, given the security problems that can arise as a result of emigration and immigration in the subregion, the Committee recommended that a group of experts should be appointed to draw up subregional legislation on the movement of persons.

35. The Committee also recommended that the questions of emigration and immigration in the subregion should be included in the agenda of its next meeting.

3. Exchange of views on the theme "Democratization, human rights and stability in Africa"

36. Following an extensive exchange of views, preceded by an introductory statement on the issue by Professor Isaac Nguema, former Chairman of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Committee encouraged the States of the subregion to pursue and strengthen the democratization process in their respective countries, at the same time respecting and promoting human rights, in order to ensure the peace, stability and development of the subregion.

37. The Committee also invited all those involved in politics to further the democratic process through consultation, dialogue and negotiation in the higher interests of their nation.

4. Elaboration of specific measures for promoting agreement on a balanced and gradual reduction of the military forces, equipment and budgets of member States

38. Having considered this question, the Committee reiterated its recommendation that the United Nations should be asked to carry out a study of the issue, in collaboration with the countries of the subregion. The study should take into account the particular situations in the various countries of the subregion and the specific missions which should be assigned to the armed forces in the field of development.

39. The Committee declared that it supported the United Nations position on disarmament and invited member States to provide the necessary information to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

5. Elaboration of measures for promoting the establishment of a standing inter-State general staff for crisis management with a view to setting up a subregional peace-keeping force

40. After consideration of this item, beginning with an introductory statement by Ambassador Olara Otunnu, President of the International Peace Academy, the

Committee recommended that its investigation should continue until the next session and that each member State should make its views known.

41. Until such time as a system to manage crises and conflicts in the subregion should be set up, however, the Committee recommended the adoption of the following transitional measures relating to policy, legislation and administration:

(1) Policy measures

42. In view of the relation between security and development, the Committee recommends the following:

(a) ECCAS should resume participation in the process of economic integration, taking into account the security of the subregion;

(b) All the organizations concerned with the economic integration of the subregion - ECCAS, the Central African Customs and Economic Union (CACEU) and the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL) - should be invited to its meetings;

(c) A national body for the management of crises and conflicts should be set up in each member State;

(d) Member States should be encouraged to intensify their bilateral cooperation initiatives in the field of subregional security.

(2) Legal measures

(a) A protocol should be added to the treaty establishing ECCAS, granting it powers in the field of security;

(b) A draft protocol of mutual assistance should be drawn up to provide the essential legal framework for the creation of a joint general staff for the management of crises and conflicts, as well as a subregional peace-keeping force;

(c) A study of the typology of crises and conflicts in the subregion should be carried out.

(3) Administrative measures

(a) A temporary general staff committee for the subregion should be set up;

(b) Military attachés should be sent to the diplomatic missions of ECCAS member States;

(c) Within the armed forces of each member State a unit specializing in peace-keeping missions should be established;

(d) A training programme for peace missions in the subregion should be organized in collaboration with the United Nations;

(e) Study visits should be organized for military or police delegations to other countries in the subregion, with a view to perpetuating and strengthening the existing relationship between officers of different countries.

6. Consideration of the draft non-aggression pact

43. After due consideration the Committee decided to adopt the draft non-aggression pact and to submit it for signature by the Heads of State and/or Government of the subregion.

IV. CONCLUSION

44. The Committee's second and third meetings, held in 1993, represented a major step towards the fulfilment of the Committee's programme of work adopted in July 1992. All the member countries of the Committee were committed to a pragmatic and realistic approach to the Committee's work, which was both important and delicate. Such commitment is more than ever essential at a time when conflicts and other threats to security are exacerbating economic difficulties and seriously jeopardizing the well-being of the peoples of the subregion. For this reason the Committee is duty bound to show itself to be a harbinger of hope in the search for ways and means to achieve the peaceful settlement of disputes between States of the Central African subregion.

45. The adoption of the non-aggression pact between the countries of the subregion and the Committee's decision to mandate its officers to play a more active political role and to undertake visits of solidarity and sympathy to countries engaged in conflict, among other initiatives, mark the beginning of major achievements in the field of preventive diplomacy and confidence-building, which have already shifted the Committee's work into higher gear after only a year of existence. The readiness of the member countries of the Committee and of the international community to provide the resources needed to facilitate this revitalized role of the officers will surely enable the Committee to achieve its noble and pressing objectives.